

US 131 S-CURVE REALIGNMENT PROJECT

GRAND RAPIDS



A decaying bridge over the Grand River needed to be realigned and rebuilt, but foundations for the new bridge would be placed in an area formerly occupied by Michigan's largest group of burial mounds. Unfortunately, the exact locations of most of the mounds were only approximately known. The Michigan Department of Transportation contracted with Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group and collaborated with the Federal Highway Administration, the Kent County Road Commission, the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians, Grand Valley State University, and the Office of the State Archaeologist, Michigan Historical Center, in the winter of 1999-2000. No burials were encountered, but significant habitation remains were excavated in 7,000 cubic feet revealing a sequence of occupations stretching from 500 B.C. to the late 1600s. Excavations were completed well in advance of construction and there were no delays resulting from the archaeological excavations. Tribal members were involved in planning the project and a number worked directly with the archaeological team.

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RESOURCE PROTECTION (SECTION 106)

SHPO